

## AGRICULTURE COUNTS

Working with and for West Virginia farmers is a great pleasure and a source of pride for this office and our field staff. The time farmers invest in answering and completing our surveys and questionnaires help us communicate the challenges and successes to their customers, farm organizations, and other government agencies.

The information in this bulletin is in large measure the result of West Virginia farmers' participation in our surveys. Information is also provided by the WVU Cooperative Extension Service, USDA - Farm Service Agency, USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Department of Commerce - National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and numerous West Virginia agribusinesses. Therefore, this bulletin is a collaborative testament to West Virginia farmers who maintain the tradition of helping our nation produce the safest and most abundant food supply in the world.

This year (2006), our office is assembling as complete a list as possible of West Virginia farm operators for the 2007 Census of Agriculture. The census definition of a farm is "any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would be sold, during the census year."

The Census of Agriculture is conducted once every five years and provides the most complete information available on all crops and livestock produced within the state. The agricultural census is the only source of complete county-level data including crops, land usage, costs and farmer demographics.

If you operate a farm **your help is needed** to help us tell the success story of agriculture. The West Virginia 1950 Census of Agriculture showed there were 81,400 farms operating 8,215,000 acres with sales of \$9,940,000. In 2002 there were 20,800 farms operating 3,585,000 acres with sales of \$482,814,000. Just over 95 percent of the 20,800 farms reported in 2002 were family or individually operated. Comparable data is not available from 1950, however, there is no evidence to suggest the percentage has changed significantly. The tradition and heritage of West Virginia farmers help this state keep agriculture an important staple in our lives. Repeating an often used and true statement, "If you eat, you are involved in agriculture."

Any farm, large or small, is important to agriculture in West Virginia and the United States. We need to know about all types of agricultural operations of all sizes. If you operate a farm, please visit our website at <https://www.agcounts.usda.gov/cgi-bin/counts> and fill in the information to ensure you are counted in the Census of Agriculture, or call this office at 1-800-535-7088 and simply say "I want to be counted."

The information you provide is kept **confidential by law** (Title 7, U.S. Code) and **will not be disclosed** to any other entity, government or private. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,

*Dale R. King*

Dale R. King  
Director

